

Chapter One: Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Lila's POV:

Out of sight, out of mind. That's what the Muggles say, I think, and that certainly applies to me. I'm Lilac Amelia Potter, more commonly called Lila, the daughter of James and Lily Potter, and the sister of the great Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived. My family is incredibly rich and well loved; I live in a huge mansion and I've never lacked for any material things. Most people would say that I'm incredibly blessed, and in a way, I am.

But in a way, I'm not.

Voldemort attacked my parents before I was born. Even today, no one will tell me why the Dark Lord suddenly decided to go after a young couple. At the time, my dad was just out of Auror's training, though I've heard he was one of the best recruits ever, and my mother was working in the Experimental Charms Department of the Ministry.

In late October 1981, Voldemort tortured and killed Peter Pettigrew, my parent's Secret Keeper and one of their dearest friends. Then, on Halloween, Voldemort broke the Fidelius Charm that my parents were hiding under at Godric's Hallow, one of their smaller properties, and tried to kill them.

No one really knows what happened, but when the Aurors arrived later, my dad was sprawled in the front hall, my mother in the nursery, and my brother in his crib, all unconscious. Harry had a lightning bolt scar carved into his forehead, and Voldemort was nothing but a pile of robes.

The wizarding world went crazy, and from that day on, even though I hadn't been born yet, my life was ruined.

When I came along, Harry was two and already quite spoiled. Jealous that I was stealing other peoples' attention, he set out to make my life miserable, as he continues to do today.

I'm not saying that my parents don't love me. They do, I know they do, but they simply don't have time for me. Right now, my dad heads the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, and my mother teaches Muggle Studies at Hogwarts, and sometimes does freelance work for the Ministry. Aside from school and vacations, I rarely see them, and when I do, Harry gets all the attention.

Yes, I suppose I would call it favoritism. Harry can get away with almost anything, and he's never in trouble. Mum and Dad are really lenient with him, and they'll give him anything he wants, almost. And me? Well...they treat me like parents normally treat their kids, except they kind of ignore me a little bit. I'm not angry with them, not anymore; I used to be until I realized that if they treated me the same that they treat Harry, I'd be a spoiled brat too.

Personally, I would hate to be in the spotlight; I don't want fame. Nor do I begrudge Harry my parent's love and time. However, I would like them for myself, occasionally. Is that too much to ask?

It doesn't help that I'm incredibly ordinary. There's nothing about me that screams 'Sister of the Boy-Who-Lived!' At Hogwarts, I get A's and E's with an O here or there, nothing remarkable. Of course, Harry's only an average student too, but he's the savior of the wizarding world, so that doesn't matter. In Quidditch, I can handle a broom without falling off, but that's about it, as opposed to Harry, who could probably live in the air quite happily.

Then there's looks. My brother is pretty cute, even I'll admit that, with messy black hair and sparkling green eyes. The Potter fortune doesn't hurt either. Both of my parents are good-looking; my dad is pretty handsome, and my mom is just gorgeous. She has eyes like Harry's, and flaming red locks highlighted in gold.

On the other end of the spectrum, there's me. Like Harry, I have Dad's unmanageable hair, but unlike Harry, it doesn't look cool on me. Since my hair is longer, it just looks plain odd. I got Dad's hazel eyes too, and my face is pretty plain.

Whenever anyone sees us as a family, they gawk at Harry first, before smiling at Mum and Dad. For all it matters, I could be a piece

of the background before anyone would notice me. How did two people with such good looks end up with me?

At home, I eat in my room unless Mum and Dad are home. In that case, I sit in the formal dining room with them, and get royally ignored while they chatter with Harry. At Hogwarts, people just don't seem to notice me. While I know enough kids to say 'hi' to, or pair up with in class, I haven't got any close friends.

But I could deal with all this, I really could, if it weren't for Harry.

I've never loved my brother, at least, not as far as I can remember. Even now, I can't say that I love him. Could you say that about someone who steals your things, regularly embarrasses you in front of your classmates, gets you in trouble, blames everything on you, and laughs at you if you try to do anything about it?

Thanks to my wonderful big brother (that was sarcasm, if you didn't notice), almost everyone seems to think that I'm incompetent, clumsy, and mentally retarded or something.

Sometimes, I hate my life.

Chapter Two: Parallel Worlds

"Hey, Lila," Harry sneered, walking into the Potter's living room.

His sister glanced up and winced. "What do you want?"

"Just thought you'd like to know that Sirius and I are going to Diagon Alley. He promised to buy me a new broom."

"As if you needed one," Lila muttered, turning away so that Harry wouldn't see her face. Although Sirius was Harry's godfather, not hers, it still hurt that he *never* spent any time with her.

"Well, enjoy yourself at home, loser!" Harry yelled, heading out the door.

Biting her lip unhappily, Lila shut the book she had been reading and wandered back up to her room. She curled up on the window seat and stared out over the vast grounds of Potter Mansion. '*Why does he have to be so mean?*' she wondered, not for the first time. '*I've never done anything to him!*'

'*I wish he was different,*' Lila thought, leaning against the cool glass. '*I wish my brother was actually nice to me.*' Immediately, a strange sensation made her shiver.

And at the exact same time, in another universe, someone else had the exact same reaction.

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"Boy, get down here!"

"Yes, Uncle Vernon," Harry replied wearily. Descending the stairs, he stalked into the kitchen and demanded, "What?"

"Don't use that tone of voice with me!" Vernon roared. "Show some respect for your elders, Boy!"

"Okay," Harry mumbled absently. "Was that all you wanted to say?"

“Shut up! How dare you talk back to me! We take you in out of the kindness of our hearts and this is all the gratitude we get in return? Go weed the garden, Boy! Earn your keep!”

Harry dearly wanted to say “What do you think I’ve been doing all these years,” but stopped himself. Instead, he muttered, “Yes, Uncle,” and went outside.

‘I hate my relatives,’ he thought bitterly, kneeling in the dirt. *‘I wish my family was alive. I wish I was loved. I wish someone cared for me.’*

A sudden tingle ran down his spine, and he jumped in surprise. “What was *that?!’*” he exclaimed aloud, as he checked his surroundings nervously. He waited tensely, but nothing else happened.

After few more minutes, he shrugged and resumed weeding. The event was forgotten in the flurry of chores that his uncle dumped on him, and when Harry went to bed that evening, he had no idea that his life was about to change radically.

Once the four occupants of Number Four Privet Drive settled in to sleep, silence descended on the house, broken only by the occasional creak or hoot.

Then the clock struck midnight. Far above the Earth, the full moon shone unnaturally bright for a moment. When it faded back to normal, everything had changed.

Chapter Three: What I Always Wanted

“Harry?”

“Hmm?”

“Harry, honey, it’s time to wake up. Are you feeling okay? Are you sick?”

Mildly confused, Harry blinked at the blurry face above him, but could make out nothing save a cloud of red. “Mrs. Weasley? What are you doing here?”

“Harry? It’s Mum. Why are you calling me Mrs. Weasley?”

‘Okay, something is seriously wrong here,’ Harry thought, beginning to panic. ‘Is this one of Voldemort’s schemes? But I thought I was safe with the Dursleys! Wait...that voice...I know that voice! It’s my mum’s voice, the one I hear whenever the dementors get close...but my mum is dead!’

“Harry?”

“Um...I’m awake,” Harry mumbled, deciding on the spur of the moment to play along. “Don’t worry, I’m fine.”

“All right then, dear,” the woman who sounded like his mother soothed. “Breakfast is ready. Just get dressed and come down when you feel like it.”

When she had gone, shutting the door behind her, Harry sat up and grabbed his glasses, jamming them on his nose and looking around frantically. Clearly, he was no longer on Privet Drive.

The room he was in had pale blue walls and a navy blue carpet, with wizarding posters and pictures plastered everywhere. Clothing, all expensive and well-made, was scattered everywhere, and there were toys and trinkets thrown about as if a hurricane had passed through. Beneath the mess, there seemed to be some expensive, beautifully carved furniture, but it was a little hard to tell.

Bewildered, Harry scrambled out of bed, noting that the mattress was ten times softer than his bed at the Dursleys, and seized his wand, which was sitting on his nightstand. *'Where on Earth am I?'* he wanted to know. *'What's happened?'*

Padding across to the huge bay window, Harry pushed the drapes aside and peered out at what looked like lush, sweeping lawns, with a large Quidditch pitch in the distance. There didn't seem to be anyone around and Harry was sorely tempted to go flying, but in light of his current predicament, decided not to.

Unable to find a clue as to his whereabouts, Harry checked the doors leading out of the room. The first led to a gigantic walk-in closet, the second to a luxurious bathroom, and the third to a long hallway. As he was poking his head out, he caught sight of a girl walking down the stairs and called out. "Hey!"

She turned towards him hesitantly. "What?"

"Where am I?"

For a moment, she just stared at him before shaking her head and continuing on her way.

"Hey, wait!"

"I'm not going to fall for your stupid tricks," she spat, with such venom that Harry recoiled. "Quit teasing me."

Confused, Harry started to stutter an apology, but she had already vanished. *'What was that all about? Am I dreaming this or something? Have I got crazy?'*

Not wanting to roam unfamiliar territory in a pair of pajama pants, Harry found some jeans, a grey t-shirt, and some plain white trainers, though he had to dig through piles of more fancy outfits to find them. Once dressed, he tucked his wand in his waistband, washed his face, ran his hands through his hair, and walked out, following the path the strange girl had taken.

After several wrong turns, Harry managed to find the woman who had woken him up. As he entered what looked like the dining room, she looked up and beamed. "Good morning, Harry!"

"Um, good morning," he replied, still bewildered.

"Well, don't just stand there, sit down," she urged, motioning to the seat across from her. With a shrug, Harry did so and seeing as she was already eating, started to serve himself breakfast.

Suddenly, he decided something. If this was a dream or a plot of some sort, he might as well make the most of it. This woman claimed to be his mother, and she certainly appeared to be Lily Potter. So why not go along with it? He'd always wanted a family, and this was certainly better than the Dursleys.

"Mum?" he ventured.

"Yes, dear?"

"Where's...Dad?"

"Oh, your father was working late last night and he's sleeping in. I'm afraid he won't have time to play Quidditch with you today; there's a lot of paperwork to do."

"That's okay," Harry said, though he was slightly disappointed. "I can just fly around by myself."

"If that's what you want," Lily approved. "Now, I'm still working on that Charms project for the Ministry, and Sirius is on duty today. Will you be okay by yourself? I can call Remus over if you want company, or you can invite one of your friends."

"I'll be fine," Harry insisted, wondering vaguely what 'on duty' meant. "Don't worry about me."

"Okay, honey. I'll see you later. Love you." And with a light kiss on his forehead, Lily headed out again, leaving Harry alone with his food.

'I don't think she's a Death Eater,' he concluded. 'She's not acting like one, unless she's trying to gain my trust...but...I just don't think so. Still...how can my parents be alive? This makes no sense. And who was that girl I saw this morning?'

Just then, Lily poked her head back into the room. "Oh, Harry, if you see Lila, please tell her to eat with the family instead of in her room when possible."

"Lila?" Harry blurted out before he could stop himself.

His mother raised an eyebrow. "Lila? Your sister? Now, Harry, be nice."

"Er...okay then...Mum."

Satisfied, Lily disappeared again, and Harry sat back, mulling over this new information. *'So I have a sister too. Wow...this is what I always wanted...well, even if it's not real, I can enjoy it while it lasts!'*

Chapter Four: Bonding Time

"Darn it all!" Lila exclaimed, throwing her quill down in frustration. "Who ever heard of a boggart!"

"Doing your summer homework?" Harry asked, pausing outside her door. Having found a Firebolt in his room, he had been on his way down to the Quidditch pitch when he heard her yell.

"Yes, not that it's any of your business," Lila snapped.

"Do you want any help?" Harry offered, making Lila glare at him suspiciously.

"Why? So you can give me the wrong answer and laugh at me when my essay gets marked wrong?"

"No, of course not," Harry protested, looking surprised. "Why would I do that?"

"No reason. Hasn't stopped you from doing it before," Lila muttered bitterly.

With a slight frown, Harry stepped into her room, which was much like his, but extremely neat and organized, and decorated in pale pink and cream. "If I did, I apologize," he said sincerely. "Really, would you like some help?"

Still wary of her brother's unusual attitude, Lila pushed her book at him. "I'm supposed to write an essay on boggarts and how you defeat them, but I can't find them in the textbook."

"Hmm...boggarts like to live in dark enclosed places, like wardrobes," Harry recited, trying to remember Professor Lupin's lesson. "They take the shape of whatever you fear most. The way to defeat a boggart is by laughing. You use the spell 'Riddikulus,' while mentally turning your worst fear into something funny. The spell will change it physically, and it will make you laugh, which in turns destroys the boggart. Ahh, here's the page you were looking for."

Lila was shocked at how much Harry knew. Taking back her textbook, she saw that he had found the chapter on boggarts for her and was now leafing through another book.

“Here; this book has a little bit about boggarts too, if you need more information,” he suggested, laying it open on her desk. “Is that enough?”

“Ye-yeah,” she stammered in surprise. “Th-thanks.”

“No problem,” Harry replied cheerfully. “Hey, I’m going down to the Quidditch pitch for a fly. Want to come with me?”

By now, Lila was sure that Harry a) had gone completely insane, b) was a Polyjuiced imposter, c) needed something from her, or d) was teasing her. “Why are you being so nice to me?” she demanded.

“I’m your brother,” Harry answered, furrowing his brow. “Um...so you want to come or not?”

“Uh, okay,” Lila agreed, picking up her Nimbus Two Thousand and One. Although she didn’t like flying, she figured that if he was setting up a trap for her, it was better to get it over with. Still, it was odd that Harry would ask her such a thing, knowing her opinion of Quidditch.

The siblings walked to the Quidditch pitch in a rather awkward silence. Once there, Harry kicked off in a flash, soaring above the golden hoops with a shout of joy. From her position on the ground, Lila could see the pure exhilaration on his face, which puzzled her. She didn’t remember ever seeing him so happy about flying, especially since he did it almost every day.

“Aren’t you coming up?” Harry called down.

Gulping as she recalled just how unskilled she was on a broom, Lila mounted and started to fly, though not very well.

Harry flew back easily and watched her for a moment, but instead of laughing at her, as she had expected, he merely commented, “There’s no need to grip the handle that hard. Relax a little. You might want to move your hands a couple inches, too.”

Cautiously, Lila followed his advice and was amazed to find that she was not wobbling quite as much now.

"That's loads better!" Harry praised.

A few more tips from Harry, and Lila was flying fairly well, for the first time in her life. "Whoohoo!" she cried as the breeze whipped her hair back. Now she could see why her father and brother loved Quidditch.

Two hours later, the windswept siblings headed back inside the house. Lila had forgotten her earlier suspicions in the elation of the moment. Thinking over how Harry had suddenly become much nicer, she gathered up the courage to ask him for some aid.

"Harry?"

"Yes?"

"Can you- could- do you think you could help me with something?"

"Sure," Harry agreed. "What do you need?"

"Well...I was going to give Dad a- a painting that I made...for his birthday, you know...and I need someone to apply the final sealing charm," Lila explained shyly. "I would ask Mum, but she's really busy right now and all..."

"I wouldn't mind, but won't the Ministry get me for underage magic?"

"The Ministry hasn't monitored your wand since you bought it," Lila said, perplexed. "Why would they ever suspect the Boy-Who-Lived?"

"Oh...okay then...oh no! I haven't got a present for Dad!"

"Harry...you've never given Dad a birthday present. Why would you need to? You're his favorite and it's not like you care anyway..."

Freezing at her words, Harry stared at the carpet and thought about it. "I didn't realize...that...it was that bad..." he mumbled uncertainly. *'What's going on? If this is Voldemort's doing, he must be crazy! This makes no sense!'*

And then it clicked. “Alternate universe!”

“What?” Lila inquired, eyeing her brother as if she thought he was mental.

“I’m in an alternate universe!”

Chapter Five: Proving Himself

“Uh huh. Very nice, Harry. I knew this was too good to be true,” Lila muttered, starting to walk away. “I hope you amused yourself.”

“What are you talking about?” Harry demanded, following her. “And I thought you wanted me to charm something for you.”

“Oh yeah...how do I know you’re not just going to ruin it?”

“I wouldn’t do that!”

“You did before, when I was eight,” Lila pointed out.

“That wasn’t me!”

“Than who was it?”

“The other me!” Harry shouted, before suddenly realizing how crazy he sounded.

His sister seemed to think so as well. “What is *wrong* with you?”

“Look, I know this sounds really insane and unbelievable, but this morning I woke up with no memory of how I got here. I’ve never seen you before in my life before today, I swear! I think I’m in an alternate universe.”

“That is the worst story you’ve ever come up with,” Lila informed him. “You really think I’m going to fall for that rubbish?”

“It’s true! Argghh...okay, how’s this. Is there anything that I can’t do?”

“Quite frankly, Harry, you can’t do much.”

“Can I cast a Patronus?”

“What’s that?”

Beginning to feel hopeful, Harry dashed into his room, found a book on Defensive Charms that he had read last year, and opened it to the section on Dementors and Patronii. “See? That’s a Patronus.”

“Sounds really difficult; it says there this is a N.E.W.T. level spell. Bet you couldn’t do it to save your life.”

“Maybe your Harry can’t, but I can,” Harry declared confidently. “It has saved my life actually.”

“Fine then, let’s see,” Lila challenged.

Casually, Harry pulled out his wand and flicked it. “*Expecto patronum!*”

Prongs galloped out of the tip and circled around, nudging Lila with his antlers as she stared in shock. “Wow! That- that was something!”

“Believe me yet?”

‘Would Harry have gone to all the trouble of learning a really advanced spell just to tease me? He’s not that dedicated...’ Lila mused. “Almost. Can you do anything else?”

“Okay, now I feel like a performing animal,” Harry grumbled, though he wasn’t really upset. “How about...um...I guess your Harry is pretty good on a broom, huh? Or else you would have said something while we were flying.”

“Yeah, he is,” Lila admitted reluctantly. “But he’s never taught me like that...you’re a good teacher.” Startled by her own words, she added, “At least in flying you know what you’re talking about.”

Harry did not seem particularly offended. “Yeah, I’m not a very good teacher. Can your Harry cook?”

“Are you kidding me? The great Harry Potter, cook! Besides, we have house-elves. Duh.”

“I can cook. Do you think the elves will let me?”

“They will if you order them to; you are, after all, their ‘Master.’ They just won’t be very happy about it.”

“You hungry?” Harry asked, starting down the hall. About three steps later, he paused and turned around in mild embarrassment. “Um...where’s the kitchen?”

Lila shook her head and tugged him in the opposite direction. “Sure I’m a little hungry, but not enough to eat something you make! Not like you’d know how to bake brownies, anyway.”

“Of course I do!” Harry objected. “Come on!”

The pair made their way to the kitchen, where, over the protests of the house-elves, Harry laid out ingredients and began baking. As he worked, Lila watched him thoughtfully.

‘He seems really at ease, like he’s done this many times before. Maybe he’s telling the truth...but it’s so far-fetched. I wonder where he learned to bake? Not the house-elves; they were too shocked to see him down here, and it would be improper. Not the house-elves at Hogwarts either; they wouldn’t teach a student to do their job. Speaking- well, thinking- of house-elves, Harry treated them a lot nicer than he usually does. He didn’t yell at them or anything.’

Lost in thought, Lila jumped as Harry sat down next to her. “I put them in the oven. They’ll be done soon.”

His sister merely nodded and resuming her pondering. *‘He’s been awfully nice today; I don’t remember ever having a civil conversation with him before. He hasn’t laughed at me at all except for when I fell off my broom, and that was a nice kind of laughing...it didn’t hurt. He even helped me with my homework and my flying...’*

‘Ding!’

“Brownies are done!” Harry announced brightly, jumping up. He pulled on a pair of baking mitts and lifted the tray out of the oven with practiced ease. “Here we are. Watch out, though, they’re hot.”

Cautiously, Lila took one, blew on it a little to cool it off, and took a bite. Instantly, her eyes widened. “Whoa! These are really good!”

“Told you so,” Harry said smugly. “Now do you believe me?”

“What’s a microwave?”

“It’s a device that muggles use to warm food. You push buttons to set the length of time, and then you put the food on a little rotating plate so that it will heat evenly. I think it uses some kind of radiation or something. Why?”

“Harry’s never taken Muggle Studies; he doesn’t know the first thing about muggles. I believe you.”

“You do? Great!” Brownies forgotten, Harry beamed at Lila, happy that at least one person didn’t think he was crazy.

“Harry? Lila?” came a new voice. They both turned abruptly to see James Potter standing in the doorway of the kitchen, and regarding them with mild confusion.

Chapter Six: Interactions

“Hi Dad,” Lila greeted him and, after a moment’s hesitation, Harry nodded as well.

“What are you doing down here?” James asked curiously. Spying the plate of brownies, his eyes lit up. “Oh! Sneaking brownies are we?”

Thinking that James might be mad, Harry ducked his head a little and replied, “Um, yeah. Is that okay?”

“Of course son! But Lila, you don’t want to ruin your appetite, do you? It’s almost lunchtime.”

Astonished at the almost blatant favoritism, Harry objected, “It’s not her fault. It was all my idea.”

“All right then,” James said, giving him a warm smile. “Mmm, these brownies are good! I’ll have to ask the house-elves to make them more often.”

To Lila’s surprise, her brother didn’t immediately speak up and claim the credit, as he usually did. Furthermore, he had actually defended her this time. Then again, this was a different Harry.

“Master James!” a house-elf squeaked suddenly as he popped in. “Master Lupin is here!”

“Oh good. Come and say hello, okay Harry?”

“Sure, Dad,” Harry agreed, heading out of the room. “Are you coming, Lila?” At that point, he realized that both his father and his sister were giving him odd looks. “What?”

James just shook his head and started walking again, while Lila mouthed ‘Tell you later,’ and followed. Shrugging, Harry went with them into the living room.

Remus Lupin was sitting on the couch, reading a newspaper and looking perfectly at home. As James, Harry, and Lila entered, he stood up with a smile. “Hello, James, Harry, Lila.”

“Aw, come on, Moony, I’ve told you time and time again: there’s no need to be so formal,” James said with a grin.

“Hi Pr— I mean, Remus,” Harry greet him, noting that his former teacher looked much better in this world, with crisp new robes and less grey hairs. All the occupants of the room eyed him strangely again.

“Um...hi, Harry. How are you?” Remus asked politely.

Slightly bewildered at Remus’ cool manner, Harry replied, “I’m fine, thanks. How are you?”

“Good. So, what’s been going on?”

While James and Remus talked, Harry drew Lila aside. “What’s going on?” he whispered. “Does Remus not like me or something?”

“No...it’s the other way around,” Lila explained. “You found out he was a werewolf when you were eight — you do know he’s a werewolf, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, you found out when you were eight and you threw this big fit about not associating with Dark creatures. After that, whenever you see him, you call him Mr. Lupin, or Professor, and you, well, act pretty rudely or ignore him. Basically, you don’t really talk to him unless you have to. I think he’s shocked that you’re being so nice. Same goes for Dad.”

“Oh...well that’s rubbish. Dark creature indeed!”

“You’re the Boy-Who-Lived; you’re kind of...phobic of Dark stuff, I guess you could say. Mum and Dad really don’t like the way you treat him; they force you to talk to him, normally. Oh yeah, and you almost never invite me to go with you anywhere. It’s been ages since we’ve been in the same room together for more than a few minutes, unless it’s mealtime.”

“That- that’s terrible!”

“Um...well...you're not exactly a very nice person.”

Harry groaned. “I'm a spoiled stuck-up brat in this world, aren't I? Wonderful, I finally have a family and now I'm supposed to act like Malfoy.”

“Malfoy? Are you talking about Draco Malfoy?”

“Yeah, why? Do I know him? Please tell me I'm not friends with that junior deatheater!”

“Definitely not,” Lila assured him. “You're mortal enemies, in fact.”

“Good; at least that hasn't changed. Do you think you could tell me more about...um, my life...later?”

“Sure, I'd be glad to,” Lila agreed — and meant it. This Harry was so much nicer than the one he had replaced. He seemed to be everything she had ever wanted in a brother.

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“Lily, have you noticed anything odd about Harry lately?” James asked his wife late that night.

“No, not really. Why? Have you?”

“I walked in on him and Lila in the kitchen today. They were talking and eating brownies together.”

“That's good. I haven't seen them spend any time together in ages.”

“Then Remus arrived,” James continued. “I suggested that Harry and I go greet him, and he agreed immediately. As we were leaving the kitchen, he turned around and asked Lila if she was coming.”

Lily raised an eyebrow. “Well, maybe he's gotten over his fear of werewolves.”

“We found Remus, and Harry said ‘Hi, Remus,’ and asked him how he was. After that, Remus and I started talking, and I noticed Harry and Lila was whispering over something in the corner.”

“So?”

“Lily, when is the last time you’ve seen Harry and Lila having a civil conversation?”

“Well...never. Oh, I see what you mean. Do you think there’s something wrong?”

“I don’t know,” James sighed, his head in his hands. “We’ll just have to wait and see.”

Chapter Seven: All About Me

“Let me get this straight...Remus is the Defense teacher at Hogwarts, Sirius is an Auror for the ministry, Dad is the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, and Mum teaches Muggles Studies,” Harry recited. “What about Pettigrew?”

“Peter Pettigrew?” Lila repeated. “He died when you were one. Voldemort tortured my parent’s location out of him.”

“So he didn’t betray anyone?”

“No, why? Did he in your world?”

“Yeah,” Harry growled. “In my world, he’s the reason I don’t have any parents, the reason my life is so miserable, and reason Voldemort’s back...hey, I just noticed no one here seems to care if you say Voldemort. Are people not afraid of him?”

“Oh it’s not that. It’s...well, Mum and Dad think that people shouldn’t be afraid of his name, so they made sure that Har- you and I could say it.”

“That makes sense. What else do I need to know? Say, what house am I in? I’m not in Slytherin, am I?” Harry questioned anxiously.

“Almost were,” Lila told him. “The Sorting Hat put you there, but you threw a fit and Professor Dumbledore didn’t think it would be safe, so you got resorted into Gryffindor.”

“Thank goodness for that!” Harry exclaimed in relief. “Who are my friends? And what house are you in?”

“I’m in Gryffindor too; I’m going into my third year. Your best friend is Ron Weasley, and you hang out with the other Gryffindor boys a lot too — well, not Neville.”

“What about Hermione?”

“Hermione? Who’s that?”

“Hermione Granger. She’s a muggleborn witch, my age, bushy brown hair, incredibly smart...”

“Oh! That Hermione!” Lila said with a puzzled frown. “She’s a Ravenclaw. If I recall correctly...well, you tease her a lot for being a know-it-all, and I think you’ve tried to copy off of her work before.”

“Oh...she was a Gryffindor and one of my best friends in my world. Okay, how about Quidditch?”

Lila snorted. “You and Ron are crazy about Quidditch. Ever since first year, you’ve been Seeker for Gryffindor, and Ron became the reserve Keeper in his second year.”

“How’d I get on the team in first year?” Harry wanted to know.

“You begged Mum and Dad until they went to Dumbledore,” Lila recounted disapprovingly. “Malfoy was furious.”

“How is Malfoy? Is he still a stuck-up arrogant git?”

“Pretty much. You two fight all the time, at least once a week.”

“All right. What about Hogwarts? What happened my first year?”

“Nothing,” Lila pronounced, bemused. “Why?”

“Well, in my first year, Voldemort tried to steal the Sorcerer’s Stone, which was hidden at Hogwarts, and Ron, Hermione, and I had to stop him. In my second year, he let a basilisk loose in the school, in my third year...well, Voldemort didn’t do anything that year, and in my fourth, a Death Eater tried to kill me by way of the Triwizard Tournament, which eventually ended in Voldemort resurrecting himself.”

“Wow! Nothing nearly that exciting ever happened here. Your first year, the Sorcerer’s Stone was at Hogwarts — at least, I overheard Mum and Dad mention it — but Professor Dumbledore moved it somewhere else. I don’t think anything major happened after that; you were just too well protected. In fact, if you hadn’t made such a fuss about it, you probably would have been put under house arrest.”

"Hmm...that's interesting. I guess Professor Dumbledore decided to cancel the Triwizard Tournament in this world. Anything else I should know?"

"Nah, that's the important stuff. You can ask me if you have any questions," Lila offered, then paused. "You know," she added, "It feels really weird to be telling you about your life."

"I really appreciate this," Harry stated hesitantly, making Lila jump.

"This is going to take some getting used to," she mumbled, shaking her head. "You being nice and all. When we get back to Hogwarts, people are going to throw a fit."

"What's the date anyway?"

"August 2nd, almost a month left. Speaking of which, you'll need to go school supply shopping soon."

"Right. It's almost midnight; I should be getting to bed. Are there any more important things I need to know? What about my relationship with Sirius?"

"Sirius?" Lila uttered, a hint of unhappiness creeping into her voice. "You too are pretty close. Sirius absolutely dotes on you, more than Dad even. Speaking of that, you don't need to worry about going to bed. You never get in trouble for anything."

"Well, I don't want you to get in trouble, so I'll just go," Harry said quietly. "Good night, Lila, and thank you for everything."

"Good night," Lila called back. She climbed under the covers, pondering over this huge change in her life. Perhaps things were looking up.

Chapter Eight: Known, Yet Unknown

Meanwhile, in another dimension...

“Boy! Boy, get up!”

Harry jerked awake with a scowl. *‘Who on earth is that?’* he wondered. *‘Who dares to speak to me like that? I’m the Boy-Who-Lived!’*

“Boy!” His bedroom door banged open, and the most enormous man that Harry had ever seen barged in. “You ungrateful lazy freak! Get up!”

“And just who do you think you are?” Harry snapped back. “What are you doing in my house?”

“*Your* house? Why, you...your aunt and I took you in out of the goodness of our hearts, and you—”

“WHAT!” At this point, Harry noticed his surroundings. In place of his luxurious room was a bare cramped chamber. The bed he was lying on was old, rickety, and quite uncomfortable, and his pajamas were baggy and threadbare. “What’s happening?”

When the large man continued to rant, Harry seized his wand from his nightstand and pointed it. “*Petrificus Totalus!* You foolish man...wait, you’re a Muggle, aren’t you? And you would go up against a wizard?”

“What are you doing? You can’t do magic! You’ll get expelled from that school of yours!” someone yelled. Turning, wand still raised, Harry saw a pudgy teen standing in the doorway looking positively terrified.

“Yeah, right, the Ministry would never expel *me*,” Harry informed him. “*Petrificus Totalus!*” Satisfied, he got out of bed and went to a trunk sitting in the corner. Inside were some Hogwarts robes, a cloak, some school things, and a small stack of muggle clothes.

“Ew, these things are ridiculous!” Harry muttered, tossing the hand-me-downs aside. He attempted to Transfigure a quill into a more

decent shirt, but after several unsuccessful tries, he gave up and pulled on the robes.

"Vernon? Have you got that boy up yet?" another voice called.

"Who are you?" Harry demanded, poking his head out into the hallway.

"You! Boy! How dare you wear those...*unnatural* clothes in my house!"

Eying the thin woman with confusing, Harry was about to curse her when he remembered a picture he had seen long ago, a picture of his mother's family. "Aunt Petunia? What are you doing here? Where is here anyway?"

"What are you talking about? This is my house, where Vernon and I and Dudley live...and you too, unfortunately." Petunia sniffed. "Go and put on some normal clothes at once!"

"You have no right to order me around! I am the Boy-Who-Lived!" Harry declared. Suddenly, an owl swooped through the kitchen window and through the hall, depositing a letter on his head before soaring away. Puzzled, he opened it. "What? A notice for underage magic? What's going on? The Ministry doesn't monitor *my* wand!"

'Ding dong!'

"What do you want?" Petunia asked crossly, yanking open the door and glaring at the shabby man outside.

"Professor?" While under normal circumstances Harry would have been less than pleased at meeting his father's 'Dark' friend, the situation was so bizarre that he was actually relieved to see a familiar face. "What's going on here? Why am I at my aunt's house?"

"Harry? Are you okay? I heard the Ministry sent you a notice for doing magic," Remus Lupin commented, seeming worried.

"I know! Can you believe their nerve, sending *me* an underage magic notice! And where are Mum and Dad?"

Instantly, Remus' face hardened and he thrust Harry away. "Who are you! You're not Harry!"

"Wh-what are you talking about? Of course I'm Harry!"

"Why are you asking for Lily and James? You know they died thirteen years ago!" By now, Remus had his wand out, and Petunia seemed about to explode with anger at their "freakishness."

"Get those...sticks out of my sight!" she screeched. "What will the neighbors think! Get out! Out!"

"What's your Patronus?" Remus questioned, ignoring her.

"What's a Patronus?"

"That's it...you're definitely not Harry! Come with me!" the werewolf ordered, seizing him roughly. Before Harry could protest, Remus pulled a quill from his pocket and pressed it into his hand. "Phoenix," he whispered, and the Portkey whisked them away.

"What are we doing here?" Harry wanted to know when they rematerialized in the sitting room of a gloomy house. "This is Grimmauld Place, isn't it? Why does it look so...dark?"

"How do you know about this place?"

"Padfoot told me...now why are we here, werewolf?"

Although Remus was used to such little barbs, he wasn't quite accustomed to hearing them from a Harry look-alike, and was slightly hurt, though he hid it well. "I want some answers, and you are going to give them to me."

A redheaded teen poked his head around the doorframe. "Harry? Harry, is that you? What are you doing here, mate?"

"Ron?" Grinning in recognition, Harry shrugged and replied, "No idea, really. But why are you here? What's going on?"

Another person walked in; this time, it was a young woman with spiky pink hair. "Remus? Why did you activate your Por— oh! Wotcher Harry! I'm Tonks." She offered a hand, which Harry eyed contemptuously.

"Just what do you do, Tonks?" he sneered, making Ron and Tonks frown, while Remus shook his head.

"Tonks," the latter interrupted, "get Dumbledore! It's an emergency! This isn't Harry." With a confused glance back, the witch vanished from the room.

"What are you talking about?" Harry and Ron inquired at the same time.

"I don't know who you are, or why you're impersonating Harry, but if you've hurt a hair on his head..." Remus said in a menacing tone of voice.

"I *am* Harry!"

"What's going on?"

"Padfoot!" Whirling around, Harry greeted his godfather enthusiastically.

Albus Dumbledore entered just behind the ex-convict. "Remus, is there a problem? Tonks said you wanted to see me at once. And why is Mr. Potter here?"

"Albus, this boy is *not* Harry," Remus stated firmly. "Just talk to him and you'll see!"

"Mr. Potter? Well, what do you have to say in this matter?"

"I *am* Harry! I don't know why Professor Lupin won't believe me!" Harry cried, frustrated.

"Am I never to escape that title?" Remus muttered to himself, while Sirius snickered.

Dumbledore ignored them. “Well, Mr. Potter, can you tell me what happened this morning? I believe the Ministry sent you a notice for underage magic. Even more seriously, this is not the first time. You’re lucky that a...friend of mine managed to hide the first two marks on your record, or the Ministry would have demanded your expulsion.”

“I don’t understand, Professor! This morning I somehow woke up in my aunt’s house, and this large man tried to attack me. I think he’s my uncle...anyway, I had to defend myself from him! Then Professor Lupin showed up, and when I asked him where my parents were, he started acting funny.”

During this speech, the occupants of the room began to look more and more confused and, in Dumbledore’s case, worried. “Your parents?” the headmaster repeated.

“Yeah, where are they anyway? Why didn’t you call them?”

In the blink of an eye, Dumbledore had his wand out, and before Harry had time to panic, the world around him went black.

Chapter Nine: Both Fake and Real

Canon dimension:

“Professor Dumbledore, what’s wrong with Harry?” Ron asked anxiously.

“I’m not sure,” the elderly wizard admitted, his brow creasing in thought. “If he’s an imposter, the spell will wear off eventually.”

Frowning, Remus drew his wand and made a complicated gesture. “There aren’t any disguising spells or illusions on him, Albus. What else can impersonate someone this well? Even his voice sounds like Harry!”

“Could it be Polyjuice?” Ron suggested.

“How do you know about Polyju— no, on second thought, don’t answer that,” Remus said, shaking his head. “Well, Polyjuice would wear off pretty soon.”

“Albus, this doesn’t make sense,” Tonks concluded, after a moment’s thought. “This boy wasn’t even trying to pretend that he’s Harry. Everyone knows that his parents are dead. Why would he ask for them?”

“I don’t know...perhaps Voldemort Confounded him.”

During their conversation, Sirius had been staring blankly at his unconscious godson. Now, he looked up sharply. “Let’s give him veritaserum. There’s no way he could lie under that.”

“Sirius, we don’t have any veritaserum,” Remus told him wearily. “At least, I don’t think so. Snape could brew some, but it would take a long time. What are we going to do in the meanwhile?”

“Isn’t there some kind of Truth Charm or something?” his old friend persisted. “I don’t like seeing Harry...like that.”

“Truth Charms can be broken,” Dumbledore pointed out.

“Can I ask him some questions?” Ron spoke up. “Either he’s Harry, or he’s not, right? If he’s really Harry, there are certain things he’ll know...”

The Headmaster considered it briefly before consenting. “Very well. Remus, revive him, but tie him up first. We can’t take chances here.”

Grimly, the werewolf did as he was told. “*Ennervate*.”

“Wha?” Harry mumbled, opening his eyes to see Remus standing over him, wand aimed at his forehead. Frightened and disoriented, he panicked and tried to squirm away, but to his horror, he found himself magically bound.

“Ron, go ahead,” Dumbledore directed the redhead, who stepped forward and knelt by Harry.

“Mate, what happened on Halloween of our first year?”

“Um...a troll got in,” Harry replied, confused as to why his friend was questioning him.

“And?” Ron prompted.

“I think some Ravenclaw got injured, but that’s it. Why?”

“Some *Ravenclaw*?” Dumbledore repeated.

“Yeah. What’s going on, Professor?”

“Harry, what’s the password to open the Map?” Sirius inquired.

“The Marauder’s Map? ‘I solemnly swear I am up to no good.’ What’s with all these questions?” Harry almost yelled, frustrated.

“Just be patient,” Remus coaxed. “What’s your dad’s Animagus form?”

“A stag.”

“What do you hear when you get close to a dementor?” Ron put in.

“What’s a dementor?”

Dumbledore, Sirius, and Remus exchanged bewildered glances. Then, Remus had an idea. “Harry...could you describe the entrance hall of Potter Mansion for me?”

“Sure, it’s white marble veined with gold, and there’s a picture of my parents and I on the wall across from the front door. The ceiling’s really high, with a crystal chandelier, and there are glass lights on the walls.”

“What about the master bedroom?” Sirius whispered.

“Dark red carpet, ivory walls with gold designs, a huge bed in the middle of the room, with a gigantic window on the east side facing the Quidditch Pitch.”

“That’s unbelievable!” Sirius exclaimed. “The master bedroom at Potter Mansion has special wards on it; you can’t enter unless you’re with a Potter,” he explained to Dumbledore, Tonks, and Ron. “James showed it to me once, but Remus and Pettigrew never saw it. By the time Harry was born, James and Lily were in hiding at Godric’s Hollow. He’s never seen Potter Mansion.”

“Of course I have!” Harry protested. “I *live* there! Are you all insane!”

“I think I know what happened,” Remus declared suddenly.

“What?” Ron demanded. “Did You-Know-Who do something to Harry?”

“Maybe...you see, I think Harry has been switched with another Harry from a different dimension.”

“That’s impossible!” Harry and Ron cried in unison.

“No, it’s very possible,” Dumbledore agreed. “An interesting thought, Remus. What do you propose we do about this? I think it’s safe to assume that Harry, regardless of his origin, is basically the same person as the Harry from this world?”

Remus grimaced as he remembered Harry's attitude earlier that morning. "I'm not so sure about that, Albus...I don't think it's a good idea to send Harry back to the Dursleys."

"Why would I stay at the Dursleys? Where are my parents?" Harry asked, his voice becoming more and more frantic.

"Calm down, your parents are safe and sound back in your own dimension," Sirius soothed, though he still looked a little doubtful of Remus' opinion. "Things are different in this world, that's all."

His godson scowled. He had a feeling that he wasn't going to like this dimension.

Chapter Ten: Day at Diagon Alley

Other dimension (not canon):

“Harry, would you like to go to Diagon Alley today?” Lily asked at breakfast a few days later. “You and Lila need to buy your school supplies.”

“Okay,” Harry agreed promptly. His parents were mildly surprised, as he had often refused to go anywhere with Lila in the past, but they had noted him spending all of his time with her lately, so they decided that his behavior wasn’t *that* odd.

“Grab a robe, then, and let’s go,” James instructed, directing his words to Harry, who was wearing muggle clothing, as teen wizards often did when not in public. After all, robes could be rather impractical at times.

Not long afterwards, the four Potters found themselves walking into Diagon Alley. As per custom, due to the siblings’ former rivalry, Lila went one way, and Lily, James, and Harry went the other.

“Where do you want to go first?” James questioned.

Glancing around, Harry spotted the Quidditch shop and grinned. “Where do you think, Dad? Come on!” Excitedly, he grabbed his father’s hand and pulled him into the store, Lily following in resignation.

After several minutes of admiring Quidditch supplies, Harry and his parents made their way to Flourish and Blotts, where Harry picked up his schoolbooks, as well as a few extra for light reading. Lily raised an eyebrow at that; Harry had never shown much interest in unnecessary studying before.

Then they went to Madam Malkin’s for new school robes. Again, for the first time since he had started Hogwarts, Harry got only his uniform and didn’t even mention more robes. To Harry, it seemed natural, considering the huge amount of clothing he already had, but to Lily and James, it was slightly unusual. If Lily recalled correctly, Harry had demanded an *entire* new wardrobe last year.

From there, they went to the Apothecary, for potion supplies, and then to the ice cream parlor for a treat. Lila met them there, also loaded down with purchases.

“Have we gotten everything?” Lily inquired.

“I think so,” Harry replied, scanning his list of needed supplies.

“Well, I’ll just take everything home then,” Lily said, shrinking and pocketing the bags. “Do you two want to wander around a little?”

Naturally, Harry and Lila jumped at the chance, and James allowed them to, though not without a lecture on being extremely careful and not going into Knockturn Alley.

Once they were left alone, the siblings set off together, meandering aimlessly around window shopping and waving to various classmates, most of whom were shocked to see them together.

“Oy, Harry!” cried a familiar voice.

“Ron!” Harry exclaimed, delighted to see his old friend. In this world, Ron appeared to be somewhat richer; his robes were of good quality and he had several packages in his arms.

“Hey, it’s good to see you mate,” the redhead greeted him cheerfully. “How’s life going?”

“Not bad,” Harry grinned back. “Not bad at all.”

“Hi Harry,” Ginny said, coming up to join them. “Oh, hi Lila! I didn’t expect to see you here!” While Ginny was a year older, she was somewhat friendly with the younger Potter.

As the two girls chattered, Ron remarked to Harry, “I thought you told me that you couldn’t stand your sister if someone paid you to. What happened?”

Harry shrugged uncomfortably. “I guess...I matured or something. She’s not so bad, really.”

“Oh look, it’s Potty,” drawled an unmistakable tone.

“Shut it, Malfoy,” Ron snapped, but Harry shook his head and stepped forward.

“What do you want, Malfoy?”

“Just wondering when your over inflated head will explode and give the rest of us some peace,” Draco sneered.

“Don’t forget, Malfoy, I can do magic in the summer — unlike you. It won’t be too hard to convince the Ministry that I’m just defending myself against a Death Eater’s son,” Harry warned. Draco’s face twisted in anger, but he realized the truth of Harry’s statement and reluctantly walked away.

“That was brilliant!” Ron cheered. “I’ve never seen him speechless before!”

However, Harry was looking to Lila, hoping he hadn’t acted too out of character. His sister was smiling at him, and seeing she had his attention, she moved closer and whispered, “That’s probably the first time you’ve ever spoken to Malfoy without hexing him. It’s also the first time he hasn’t made you look like an idiot. Good job!”

Her words made Harry feel warm inside. Life was good — for now.

Chapter Eleven: Harry Problems

Harry's home dimension (the canon one):

It had been three days, and the occupants of Number 12 Grimmauld Place were missing their Harry Potter more and more. Ginny was completely avoiding the new Harry Potter, and before long, so was Ron. Fred and George pranked him until their mother forced them to stop, at which point they also disappeared.

Mr. and Mrs. Weasley and the rest of the Order members mostly stayed away from him, and (luckily) Snape had not yet come by. However, Hermione was still having trouble believing that this was all real. She had arrived back from her vacation abroad with her parents just after Harry arrived.

"Another dimension?" Hermione shrieked, half in excitement and half in skepticism. "But...I thought those were only conjectures! You mean to say they really exist?"

"I don't see how Harry could know all the things he does otherwise," Remus told her. "I've asked him several questions about James and Lily, things that aren't commonly known, especially since they've been...gone...for so many years."

"So...what's his world like then?" Hermione asked curiously. "Is You-Know-Who still around?"

"His world sounds good to me, but personally, I wouldn't like to live there," Ron declared firmly.

"Why not?" Remus inquired, raising an eyebrow. "He told us that your dad got promoted, you have more than enough money, and everything seems peaceful. What's wrong with it?"

"Harry's a prat, that's what's wrong," Ron grumbled. "And from what I've heard, I'm a prat too. Have you heard the way he's been talking? *'How dare you do this and this and this; I'm the Boy-Who-Lived!'*"

Hermione smiled a little at Ron's impersonation, but stopped when she realized that he wasn't joking. "Seriously? But...Harry hates his fame! He'd never say something like that!"

"Not our Harry, but this new one seems to love the spotlight," Remus remarked dryly. "Quite a change it is."

As if to emphasize Remus' statement, there was a yell from elsewhere in the house. "I am NOT staying here with that *werewolf*!"

"How could he say such a thing?" Hermione gasped in horror.

She glanced at her old professor, who shook his head in resignation. "This Harry doesn't like Dark things...or creatures."

"You're not a Dark creature," Ron asserted staunchly. "You were the best Defense teacher we ever had!"

"Well, Harry seems to think otherwise." Ron and Hermione exchanged sympathetic glances. It was clear that Harry's dislike hurt Remus deeply.

A door slammed upstairs, and a moment later, Sirius came into the room, looking weary. Without a word, he collapsed on the couch and groaned.

"What's wrong?" Hermione questioned. "Is it Harry?"

"Yeah," Sirius mumbled. "More like what's *not* wrong. That kid...well..."

"What'd you do with him?" Ron wanted to know.

"Nothing, really. I warded his room so if we'll know if he leaves; that's about it. He seemed really upset that he couldn't leave the house."

"But doesn't he understand the danger he's in?" Hermione exclaimed, perplexed. "Doesn't he realize how important it is for him to stay safe?"

“He understands how important he is, definitely,” Sirius grunted. “As for the danger...no, I’d say he doesn’t. Apparently in his world, Voldemort isn’t back yet.”

“Do you think our Harry is in his world?” Ron wondered. “Must be nice and peaceful then.”

“I hope so. Harry could definitely use a break,” Hermione commented. “But what are you going to do about this Harry, Professor Lupin?”

“In all likelihood, he’ll stay here for the rest of the summer. Several of the Order members are working on a way to travel between dimensions, but they’ve made very little progress. Chances are, Harry will have to go back to Hogwarts with you guys,” Remus informed them.

“Hogwarts!” Ron yelled. “But...everyone will know that it’s not Harry! He’s just too different!”

“You have about a month to talk him into behaving more like our Harry,” Sirius pointed out. “Can you imagine what would happen if Voldemort found out how weak Harry is right now?”

“He’d kill him in a flash,” Hermione whispered, turning pale. “If this Harry is really as spoiled and unprepared as you say...he’d never be able to stand up to Voldemort.”

Author's Note: I'm really sorry about the long wait, but I just got swamped with homework, and I was a little stuck on where I wanted the plot to go next. Thanks for waiting!

Chapter Twelve: Encounters on the Hogwarts Express

Alternate dimension, September 1st, 1995:

“Ready, Harry?”

Taking a deep breath, Harry straightened the collar of his Hogwarts robes and nodded. Since he and his family were going to be portkeying to the train station, he figured he might as well get dressed and spare himself the trouble later. “Yeah. Here goes nothing. Say, who do I usually sit with?”

“Ron, Dean, and Seamus, I think.” Lila answered absently. “Why? Are you planning to sit with someone else?”

“I’d like to find Hermione, if possible, and you know, you’re welcome to sit with me,” Harry told her hesitantly. “I wouldn’t mind the company.”

“Ron probably would,” Lila said practically. “He’ll think I’m a tag-a-long. Thanks, but I’ll be okay.”

“Harry! Lila! Time to go!” James yelled.

Quickly, the siblings ran into the entrance hall, where their trunks and parents were already waiting. They seized their respective belongings and touched the portkey, a scarf. With a sharp jerk that reminded Harry uncomfortably of the Third Task, the Potters landed on Platform Nine and Three-Quarters.

For the first time in his life, Harry’s true family sent him off with a round of goodbyes, although technically, the only person he wouldn’t be seeing was his dad. Lily was going to apparate to Hogsmeade and walk to the castle, rather than ride the train, but she would be teaching at Hogwarts all year.

Once their farewells were said, Harry boarded the train, chose an empty compartment, and stowed his trunk, while Lila did the same elsewhere. Within a few minutes, Ron, Dean, and Seamus had found Harry and sat down with him. The latter listened to them laugh and joke around for about an hour before excusing himself.

It took a surprisingly long time to find Hermione, who had locked herself up at the back of the train as soon as the Prefect meeting let out. Absently, Harry thought it odd that neither he nor Ron were Prefects, but dismissed the matter for later contemplation.

"Hermione?" he called softly, dispelling her locking charm and poking his head into her compartment. "Hermione, can I come in?"

"What do you want, Potter?" she inquired wearily, not looking up from the book she was reading.

Shuffling his feet awkwardly, Harry slipped inside and sat down across from her. "I...I haven't been very n-nice to you," he stammered. "I just w-wanted to apologize for my behavior."

Taken aback at the unexpected words, Hermione gave him her full attention. "Is this some kind of joke, Potter? Did someone put this up to you?"

"N-no," Harry said truthfully. "It's just that...this summer, I've sort of...grown up, I guess you could say. I'm not proud of the way I've acted in the past, and I'd like to start over again, if that's okay with you."

Hermione eyed him warily. "How do I know you're not just trying to get my help on your homework?"

"I'm not saying that wouldn't be nice," Harry admitted, "but really, that's not what I'm after. I just want you to know that I truly am sorry and...I wouldn't mind being friends."

Unfortunately, Hermione still wasn't convinced. "If you've really had a change of heart, prove it."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Admit in front of witnesses that I'm better at magic than you are."

"That's it?" Harry asked, surprised. "Of course you're better at magic; you've got to be the smartest person at Hogwarts! Who do you want me to say it in front of?"

“Um...Malfoy and his cronies.”

“Okay. Right now?”

“N-no, it doesn’t have to be right now, just whenever you have a chance.”

“That’s fine.” Standing up, Harry smiled at her and walked out, pausing in the doorway. “I really am sorry, Hermione. I’ll make it up to you any way I can.”

When he had gone, Hermione leaned back against the window and thought over the strange encounter. *‘He seemed sincere, but what could have made him change so drastically in one summer? Was he telling the truth? Why would he want to be friends with me? Did his parents order him to? No, they wouldn’t order him to do anything.*

Maybe he feels sorry for me. But he didn’t act like it...I wonder if he really intends to go through with it. He’s so bigheaded I would never think he could admit that someone, much less a muggleborn witch, is better than he is in anything, even though I beat him in every class.

Well, I guess I just have to wait and see...hopefully, this isn’t just another one of his tricks.’

.....

As he was leaving Hermione’s compartment, Harry ran into Malfoy.

“So, Potty,” he sneered, “you’re not the only one who can do magic now.”

“Technically, you shouldn’t do magic until you step foot on Hogwarts ground,” Harry returned coolly. “And I’ve learned a lot this summer. If I were you, I’d stay away from me.” It was true, too. While Harry had spent most of his time with his family, especially Lila, he had also studied extensively.

Naturally, Malfoy didn’t believe him. “*Expelliarmus!*” he shouted.

"Protego!" Harry countered. *"Petrificus totalus! Stupefy!"* His Body-Bind made Malfoy jump sideways, straight into the path of his stunner. "Nice try, Malfoy."

Crabbe and Goyle, Malfoy's ever-present shadows, lunged at Harry, but the Gryffindor casually ducked, making both Slytherins crash into each other.

"Mr. Potter! Mr. Malfoy! What is going on?" a vaguely familiar voice exclaimed.

"Professor Flitwick?" Harry hadn't realized that the Charms instructor was even on the train. Few teachers had ever ridden the Hogwarts Express in his world.

"Mr. Potter, explain," Flitwick demanded.

"Malfoy tried to disarm me, so I threw up a shield, followed by a Body-Bind and a stunner," Harry recounted. "He got hit with the stunner, and Crabbe and Goyle attacked me, but I dodged, and they hit each other instead. You can check my wand if you want."

Eyes narrowed suspiciously at Harry's oddly straightforward manner, Flitwick took the proffered wand and performed 'Priori incantatem' on it, only to find that Harry's story matched. Before the shield, his last spell had been a shrinking charm, for his luggage.

"Very well then," the tiny wizard snapped, as he revived Draco. "Messrs. Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle, detention with Mr. Filch for attacking a student, and be glad the school year hasn't officially started, or I'd take house points. Now go on your way, and no more fighting!"

Calmly, Harry retrieved his wand and rejoined Ron, Dean, and Seamus.

"Hey, mate, where'd you go?" Ron questioned. "You were gone for ages."

"Ran into Malfoy," Harry replied casually. "He, Crabbe, and Goyle have got detention with Filch already."

“Excellent!” Seamus cheered. “What happened?”

“The idiot tried to disarm me. I blocked and stunned him, and then Professor Flitwick came along. He asked me what happened, so I told him and gave him my wand for him to check, and then he gave Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle detention for attacking me.”

“That’s great!” Ron exclaimed. “Bloody brilliant!”

“Yeah,” Harry said, though he shifted uncomfortably, unsure of whether or not he really wanted to celebrate. Sometimes, the attitude of his counterpart here reminded him of Dudley.

For the rest of the ride, the three teens played Exploding Snap, talked, ate candies and pastries, and greeted various classmates as they passed by. All too soon for Harry, the train stopped and the students got out.

Chapter Thirteen: Being Harry, Part One

Canon dimension, September 1st, 1995:

"Remember, you're to act as if you hate being the Boy-Who-Lived," Sirius reminded sternly.

"I know, I know," Harry snapped petulantly.

"Good. You'd better not forget." The ex-convict sighed and turned to his old friend. "Do you really think we can pull this off, Remus?"

"We don't have a choice, Padfoot."

"I know. Are you three packed?"

Harry, Ron, and Hermione nodded with various degrees of enthusiasm, ranging from sulky (Harry) to slightly depressed (Ron) to eager and excited (Hermione).

Tonks grinned brightly. "That's good! Hey, where's Ginny?"

"I dunno," Ron shrugged. "She's been acting real funny ever since...well, since Harry came."

"I'll bet she's still in her room. Ginny!" Tonks yelled, peering up the staircase.

"I'm here," the younger girl called back. After a moment, she appeared dragging her trunk behind her.

"Right, let's go then. Professor Dumbledore sent us a portkey, so grab on," Tonks directed, holding out a piece of rope. She, Remus, and the teens touched it, and once she was sure they had their trunks firmly in hand, Tonks said, "Hogwarts." A rush of wind and a dizzying swirl of magic accompanied them as they landed heavily on Platform Nine and Three-Quarters. After listening to a few more lectures and last-minute warnings, the quartet was finally allowed to board the train.

"Come on; let's find a compartment," Ron urged. "This trunk is bloody heavy."

"Just charm it," Harry suggested lazily.

"We can't do magic yet!" Hermione exclaimed. "Not until we get back to Hogwarts! We'll get in trouble with the Ministry!"

"That's a stupid rule," Harry complained. "We should get to do magic whenever we want."

"You mean like the way you threw stunners around at your aunt's house?" Hermione retorted. "You're lucky they didn't expel you! If Professor Dumbledore hadn't gotten someone to cover for you..."

"What was I suppose to do?" Harry retorted. "What would you do if you woke up in a strange house with these strange people who kept yelling at you?"

Shaking her head, Hermione gave up trying to argue with him and busied herself with getting her trunk onto the train. Behind her back, Harry scowled fiercely. *'I hate this dimension,'* he thought to himself. *'I can't do anything here! No magic, no Quidditch...I spend all day getting yelled at and being forced to clean that dirty house like a house-elf! I can't believe they treat me, the Boy-Who-Lived, this way! Why did the other me put up with this?'*

"Harry?"

"Huh? Oh, hullo Dean," Harry greeted his fellow Gryffindor.

"How was your summer?" Dean asked.

"Rotten," Harry griped. "Simply rotten. Worst summer I've ever had!"

"Oh," Dean stammered, looking taken aback. "I'm sorry to hear that, mate. Where are Ron and Hermione?"

"On the train somewhere," Harry replied, unenthusiastically.

Dean frowned slightly. "Er, did you two have another fight or something? I thought you made up from last year?"

"Last year?" Harry inquired before recalling what he had learned about his counterpart's life. "Oh, that...yeah, um, we made up. Everything's fine."

"If you say so," his classmate answered, though he still seemed suspicious. "Well, it's getting late. You coming?"

"Yeah, sure." Feeling somewhat more cheerful, Harry followed Dean onto the train and reluctantly made his way to the compartment where his "friends" were sitting, while Dean went to find Seamus.

Not wanting to talk to them, Harry sulked in the corner and ignored the other three teens for the first hour or so of the ride, as they chatted among themselves. Then, the door opened and Malfoy came in, flanked by his ever-present goons.

Chapter Fourteen: Being Harry, Part Two

Canon dimension:

"Malfoy!" Ron exclaimed sharply. "What do you want this time?"

"Just thought I'd see if the papers are right," the blond Slytherin drawled. "So, Scarhead, are you as batty as they say you are?"

"Shut up, Malfoy," Harry growled, pure hatred shining in his eyes. His fellow Gryffindors were stunned at the vehemence in his voice. "Shut up before I make you!"

"Oh yeah? What could you do to hurt me?" Draco asked contemptuously.

Blinded by anger, Harry drew his wand and sent a series of hexes at his archenemy, but he was too slow, and his spells lacked the power and complexity of his counterpart. Draco dodged easily, sending a handful of curses back.

"You're getting slow, Potty," he smirked, when a nasty-looking jinx struck Harry and made him cry out in pain.

"Why...you..." At a loss for words, Harry hurled himself at Draco, catching him by surprise, and they went down in a tangle of limbs.

"*Petrificus Totalus!*" Hermione yelled. "Stop it! We'll get in trouble for fighting!"

"Why'd you break it up?" Ron demanded. "I was just about to give this git what he deserves!"

"Harry, Ron, you should both know better!" Hermione lectured, freeing the former from the Body-Bind. "What will Professor Dumbledore say?"

"Who cares?" Harry panted angrily.

At that, Draco stopped and looked at Harry with some disbelief. "Rebelling, Potty? Not quite the Golden Boy everyone says you are, huh?"

"I do what I want," Harry snapped back. "No Headmaster is going to stop that!"

Ron and Hermione gasped and exchanged panicked glances, knowing that this was completely out of character for their Harry. On the other hand, Draco frowned, studying Harry carefully.

"What's happened to you, Potter?" he queried slowly. "You've...changed."

"None of your business," Harry retorted. "Now get out or I'll make you!"

Much to everyone's astonishment, Draco went without a fight, a thoughtful expression on his face. As soon as he was gone, Hermione slapped Harry, hard.

"What is wrong with you!" she raged. "Don't you understand what's at stake here? If Draco tells his dad what happened, and his dad tells You-Know-Who, we'll be in big trouble!"

"What are you talking about?" Ron inquired, baffled.

"If You-Know-Who figures out that Harry's from another dimension, what do you think will happen?" Hermione shrieked. "He might try to go to that dimension, or kill Harry, or...something! We're trying to keep this a secret, remember?!"

Finally recovering from the shock of Hermione's blow, Harry's eyes narrowed. "Who do you think you are, talking to me like that? How dare you hit me? I'm the Boy-Who-Lived!"

"We know that," Ron snarled. "You've told us a hundred bloody times already! Just shut up about it, will ya?"

"I can't take this anymore!" Hermione fumed, and stormed out of the compartment, Ron following a second later. Harry was left alone to sulk.

When the train reached Hogwarts, Harry rode up to the castle alone and sat by himself at the Gryffindor table, scowling at everyone who cast him curious looks. He picked at his food, barely noticing what he ate.

'I hate this dimension,' he grumbled to himself. 'I wish I was home again, with Mum and Dad. They wouldn't let people treat me this way!'

Involved in his mental complaints, he didn't notice Hermione make her way to the Head table and hold a whispered conversation with Dumbledore. Therefore, he was taken by surprise when the Headmaster touched his shoulder.

"Mr. Potter, could you please come with me?"

"Why? I didn't do anything!" Harry protested.

"I didn't say that I did. I need to show you something," Dumbledore explained. He guided the wary teen to his office and pointed to a chair. "Have a seat. Do you know what a Pensieve is, Mr. Potter?"

"No."

"A Pensieve is a magical device used to store memories and thoughts, so that you can view them more objectively. You can also use them to share your memories with others," Dumbledore informed him, showing him a large stone basin filled with some silver substance.

"Okay...why are you showing me this?"

"Have you ever heard of Legilimency?" Seeing Harry shake his head, Dumbledore continued, "It is, to put it simply, a form of mind reading. I'm sorry to say that I used some Legilimency on your counterpart without his knowledge."

“You mean...you can read my mind?!” Harry exclaimed, shocked.

“Only to an extent. Finding out a deeper secret is impossible without alerting the subject. Legilimency is a very dangerous art, Mr. Potter. I would only use it in the gravest cases.”

“Why’d you use it on the other me then?”

“I needed to view his battles with Voldemort so that I could gauge how powerful he had become, but I didn’t want to ask Harry to relive them just for me. I knew they were painful memories.”

Touching his wand to his temple, the elderly wizard drew a stream of shimmering material seeming from his head and deposited it into the Pensieve. And before Harry could react, Dumbledore took his hand and plunged it into the swirl of memories.

Chapter Fifteen: Not Being Harry, Part One

Alternate dimension:

As they approached the carriages that would take them to the castle, Harry gasped, seeing the strange, grey horse-like creatures that were pulling them.

"What is it?" Dean asked.

"I thought the carriages were horseless," Harry said faintly. "What *are* those things?"

"What things?" Ron questioned, craning his neck around. "I don't see anything."

"You mean the thestrals," Hermione informed them as she walked past. "You can only see them if you've seen someone die. They've always pulled the carriages; it says so in *Hogwarts: A History*."

"Oh, shut up, Granger," Ron snapped irritably. "We didn't ask for your input."

"I asked," Harry put in unexpectedly. "Thanks, Hermione."

The other teen was startled by Harry's gratitude, but nodded shyly before daring to inquire, "Who did you see die? It must have been this summer, if you haven't seen them before."

"I...I don't know," Harry mumbled uncertainly. After all, the real Harry from this world probably hadn't seen anyone get murdered yet, but he remembered Cedric's death all too well.

"It's none of your business; buzz off," Seamus jumped in.

"It's okay, guys," Harry defended her quickly. Giving Hermione a wink, he turned back towards Hogwarts. "Come on; let's go."

"What was that all about?" Ron wanted to know once they were settled in a carriage. "Since when did you start calling Granger by her first name?"

"I saw her on the train and we talked a little," Harry told him with a shrug. "I've realized what a prat I've been, so I apologized and we're kind of friends now."

"Friends? With Granger?" Dean exclaimed. "Are you crazy? She's so weird! I mean, she studies nonstop and she's such a loner!"

"All the more reason to talk to her," Harry pointed out. "She could use a friend, don't you think? Anyway, she seems nice enough."

The other boys looked a little disgruntled, but they let the matter drop for the time being and talked about other things until they reached Hogwarts. In almost every way, the Sorting and Welcome Feast was exactly as Harry expected, but with one major difference: the way others behaved around him.

Several students, both in his year and older, called out greetings to him, while many more, mainly those younger than him, shied away or avoided him. According to Lila, they were the ones he had teased and bullied mercilessly. Then there were the incoming first years. They stared at Harry in awe after they had been sorted, but that was hardly something new.

Before long, Harry found himself back in his old dorm room, where he realized with surprise that he had not spoken to Neville, and the other boy was currently nowhere in sight.

"Hey, where's Neville?" he asked Ron.

"I dunno; why d'ya ask?"

"No reason," Harry said quickly, remembering vaguely that Lila had mentioned they weren't exactly friends. He was climbing into bed when Neville finally showed up.

"Hi, Neville," Harry greeted him cheerfully. "Did you have a good summer?"

"Um, y-y-yeah," the other boy stammered, looking terrified.

Puzzled at his frightened demeanor, Harry inquired, "What's wrong?"

"N-n-nothing!" Neville squeaked and dove into the bathroom.

"Well, that was weird," Harry commented to no one in particular.

Seamus shook his head. "Not really, Longbottom's always been a bit of a coward. Don't know how he got into Gryffindor. And since when have you called him Neville? What's with all the first names?"

Figuring that his counterpart might have picked on Neville as well, Harry shrugged and didn't answer, merely closing the curtains around his four-poster and lying down.

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"Aw, great, Potions with Slytherins first thing! Why, why, why!" Ron moaned, staring at his schedule.

"And History of Magic right after that," Harry added. "They're trying to kill us!"

"Then Charms in the afternoon with Ravenclaw; that's not so bad," Dean pointed out. "Cheer up."

"Class starts soon," Harry noted, glancing at his watch. "We'd better start walking, or Snape will kill us for being late on the first day."

Professor Snape seemed inclined to kill them anyway, judging from his scowl as they entered. "Potter, Weasley," he drawled, "let's see if you remember anything at all from last year, shall we? Sit!"

Wordlessly, they sat down at the back of the room, as far away from their teacher as possible. The class was just as awful as ever; Gryffindor lost twenty points, and Harry and Ron received an A for their efforts, which, all things considered, was quite good. However, Harry did notice Snape watching him closely throughout the lesson.

On the way to History of Magic, Harry came across a sight that made his blood boil. Malfoy and several Slytherins had cornered Lila and were taunting her, stealing her books and threatening to curse her. Worst of all, the resigned expression on her face told him that this was not the first time.

“Malfoy!” he roared, striding forward. “What do you think you’re doing!”

“How strange,” the blonde remarked coolly. “You never seemed to care before, Potter.”

“Well, I care now!” Harry snapped. “Get out of here before I hex you into oblivion!”

Seeing several Gryffindors back up the Boy-Who-Lived, Draco reluctantly left, his entourage trailing him, while Harry turned to his sister. “Are you okay, Lila?”

“Yeah, thanks,” she whispered softly. “I...it’s not that I couldn’t fight back...but Malfoy would have blamed it on me and I’d get in trouble...”

“It’s okay; don’t worry about that git,” Harry assured her. “Has this happened before?”

“Well...yeah.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

Lila didn’t reply, but Harry could read the answer in her eyes: ‘You never cared before.’

“Listen to me, Lila,” Harry ordered, pulling her into an alcove so that no one would overhear. “From what I know of your Harry, he’s a spoiled arrogant brat with no concern for anyone except himself. I’d like to think that I’m nothing like him.”

“Y-you’re not,” Lila told him. “I...well, I’ve been so used to being ignored. Last year, Malfoy stole my Potions homework right in front of you, and you just laughed it off and pretended not to see. It was like I wasn’t even related to you; you didn’t care at all.”

“I care now!” Harry said fiercely. “If there’s ever a problem, Malfoy, a teacher, homework, boys...anything! you can come to me, okay? I’ll always be there for you, I promise. I never had a chance to have a sister before, and I’m not going to lose you now that I’ve got one.”

“O-okay. Thank you, Harry.”

“No problem. Now, I’ve got to get to class, and so do you.” Flashing her a sudden grin, Harry picked up his bag and moved to rejoin Ron, calling back over his shoulder, “Hey, what are big brothers for?”

Chapter Sixteen: Not Being Harry, Part Two

Alternate dimension:

“Seriously, mate, what’s up with you?” Ron demanded as they entered Professor Binn’s classroom. “First you defend Granger, then you rescue your sister...what happened to you?”

“Nothing. Is it a crime to help your family members?” Harry retorted. “I just grew up this summer, okay? I don’t like the way I’ve been behaving, so I’m changing. Do you have a problem with that?”

“Sheesh; no need to snap,” Ron muttered. “If you want to act all heroic, be my guest. You are the Boy-Who-Lived, after all.”

“Don’t remind me,” Harry grumbled. “I wish I could just be normal.”

This comment made Ron frown. “I thought you liked being famous.” Harry merely shrugged and settled down to do his Potions essay while their History teacher droned on and on.

After what seemed like an eternity, it was time for lunch. Instead of sitting with Ron, Dean, and Seamus, Harry paused by Neville, who was alone at the far end of the Gryffindor table. “Hey, Neville, can I sit with you today?”

Again, the other boy seemed absolutely terrified, but managed a slight nod. “S-sure, H-Harry, whatever y-you w-want.”

“So what’d you think of classes so far?” Harry asked, as he began eating. “I thought Snape was simply awful. He told Ron and I that we were crushing our lacewing flies the wrong way! I wasn’t even aware there was more than one way to crush something!”

As he had hoped, his indignant exclamation helped Neville relax a little. “Yeah, he always m-makes me nervous in Potions.”

“I’d do *loads* better in that class if he weren’t there,” Harry grumbled. “I can’t believe he took points off for ‘breathing loudly.’ I can’t help it if he seems to think I breathe louder than everyone else! If I don’t breathe, I’ll suffocate!”

“Maybe that’s what he w-wants,” Neville suggested.

“I don’t doubt that...slimy git!”

“Oy, Harry, why are you sitting here?” Ron inquired, coming up to the pair. “We sit at the other end, remember?”

“Go ahead,” Harry urged, “I’ll just keep Neville company.”

Ron complied, though he gave Harry an odd look, leaving the two Gryffindors alone again.

“Harry...” Neville said suddenly, seeming to gather his courage for a question.

“Yes?”

“Why...why are you acting so different?”

“Different? In what way?”

“Well...you’re a lot...n-nicer...”

Harry sighed. “I’ve done a lot of thinking this summer and I’ve decided to change my behavior. I...I’ve been pretty mean to you in the past, I guess, and...well, I’d like to apologize and start over.” Inwardly, he winced; that was almost exactly what he’d said to Hermione!

However, it seemed to satisfy Neville, who beamed with pleasure. “Really? I’d like that!”

They spent the rest of lunch talking amiably, and even walked to Charms together, where they parted, Harry going to sit with Ron, and Neville, with a Ravenclaw whom Harry didn’t know.

“Okay, class, we’re going to review some charms today, just to refresh your memories and get you into the school mode,” Professor Flitwick announced. “We’ll start with the Summoning Charm. Pair up, please, and not with your usual partners. Try to go with someone new this time.”

Glancing around, Harry noticed Hermione looking a bit lost as her housemates paired off around her, and quickly made his way across the room. "Want to be my partner?" he offered.

"Um...sure," she agreed hesitantly, though whether it was because she was wary of him, or because she thought he was terrible at Charms, Harry couldn't tell.

"You first or me?"

"I'll go," Hermione volunteered, pointing her wand at the cushions they were using. "*Accio cushion!*" It zoomed into her hands, making Harry clap.

"Nice!"

Hermione flushed slightly and floated it back to its original position for Harry to try. Luckily, he still remembered the charm from the First Task and managed it easily.

"My, your spellwork has improved greatly, Mr. Potter," Professor Flitwick commented as he passed by. "Excellent work!"

Since both Harry and Hermione had both mastered the charm, they moved on to other things, trying to outdo each other. Naturally, Hermione knew more spells, but Harry was pleasantly surprised at how many he did know.

When the class ended, Hermione gave Harry a timid smile, prompting him to ask if she wanted to work on her homework with him that evening. To his delight, she agreed.

On the other hand, Ron was becoming increasingly frustrated with his best friend, who had changed so much that he felt like a stranger. Sensing a confrontation, Harry disappeared somewhere after Charms, and Ron was unable to locate him. As a matter of fact, Harry went to the Muggle Studies classroom to spend some time with his mother.

Lily was delighted to see her son. "Hello, Harry, come in! How was class?"

“Good, except for Professor Snape. He’s really driving me crazy!”

“Do you want me to have a talk with Professor Dumbledore about him?”

“Thanks, but no,” Harry declined. “I can handle it. Do you need any help? I haven’t really got much homework, and I have a free period right now.”

“It’s sweet of you to offer, honey, but it’s only the first day. I’m hardly swamped with assignments yet,” Lily pointed out. “Why don’t you go flying?”

“That’s a great idea,” Harry agreed, his eyes lighting up. “Thanks, Mum! I’ll see you at dinner!”

Laughing at her Quidditch-obsessed son, Lily returned to her work, pushing aside the thoughts that had haunted her all summer of how Harry was so different. After all, he had only changed for the better. Surely there couldn’t be anything wrong...right?

Chapter Seventeen: Reality and Responsibility

Canon dimension:

Harry was startled to find himself standing in a dark stone chamber, Dumbledore standing beside him. "Where are we?" he demanded.

"We are currently beneath the school," Dumbledore replied serenely. "This is, I believe, the second time your counterpart met Voldemort."

"What?"

"Just watch."

Frowning, Harry turned and saw a thin wizard in purple robes with a turban wrapped around his head. He was standing in front of a full-length mirror and studying it carefully.

As Harry and Dumbledore watched, there was a startled cry, and a younger version of Harry emerged from the flames guarding the one entrance. "*You!*" the memory Harry gasped.

"Me," the other man agreed calmly, smiling. "I wondered whether I'd be meeting you here, Potter."

"But I thought — Snape —"

"Severus?" the wizard laughed. "Yes, Severus does seem the type, doesn't he? So useful to have him swooping around like an overgrown bat. Next to him, who would suspect p-p-poor, st-stuttering P-Professor Quirrell?"

"What's going on?" the real Harry asked Dumbledore anxiously.

"Quirrell was attempting to steal the Sorcerer's Stone, which I had hidden in the mirror," Dumbledore explained. "You stopped him."

Still trying to process this new information, Harry watched, horrified, as Quirrell tried to get the Stone, and then finally unveiled Lord Voldemort on the back of his head. This last act made him scream in alarm.

“Professor! What...what is that?” he shrieked.

“That is the disembodied Lord Voldemort,” Dumbledore answered. “He was, at that time, possessing Quirrell and sharing his body.”

“And...and I fought that...*thing*?” Harry stammered.

“Indeed, you did, and won, as well.”

Stunned, Harry stared at his counterpart while he and Voldemort fought, rolling back and forth across the room. He saw the fierce expression and the burning determination in the other Harry’s face, and he was awed.

The memory cut off when the memory Harry fell unconscious. Instantly, Harry and Dumbledore were transported into another incident, and then another, and another. Dumbledore showed his charge the battle in the Chamber of Secrets, the times he encountered dementors, and Voldemort’s resurrection.

By the time they emerged from the Pensieve, Harry was as pale as a ghost. “Professor?” he whispered meekly.

“Yes, Mr. Potter?”

“That...was...V-Voldemort? He’s back?”

“He has indeed returned here, and I’m sure he will eventually return in your dimension as well,” Dumbledore responded firmly. “Voldemort is nothing if not persistent and determined.”

“Why did I — the other me — have to fight him so many times?” Harry questioned hesitantly.

“Mr. Potter...you defeated Voldemort when you were a child. The Dark Lord does not take kindly to being defeated. He will continue to chase after you if for no other reason than the fact that you have defied him so many times.”

Gazing more intently at the teen, Dumbledore continued in a grave tone of voice. “You may be in more danger here than in your own

dimension, since here Voldemort is back in power and you have survived him so many more times...but you will always be in danger. Your title as the Boy-Who-Lived is not all glory and fame. You are in very real danger no matter what because of who you are.”

Gulping, Harry looked at his feet and realized for the first time that there were disadvantages to his title. “Professor...do you think he’ll kill me?” he wanted to know.

“I cannot say, Mr. Potter. That is entirely up to you. Do you know that people look up to you as a beacon of hope? You carry a great responsibility on your shoulders,” Dumbledore stated seriously.

“I...I see,” Harry stuttered. “Um...can I go now?”

“Yes, but don’t forget to think about what I showed you.”

Still trembling from the memory of the newly resurrected Lord Voldemort, Harry fled the office.

Author’s Note: The dialogue in the memory is taken directly from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* by J.K. Rowling, page 288 of the Scholastic American paperback edition.

Chapter Eighteen: In the Library

Alternate dimension:

“Hi Hermione!” Harry said brightly, setting his books down beside her. Remembering that they were in the library, he lowered his voice and asked, “How are you?”

“I’m fine, thanks,” Hermione replied, smiling hesitantly. “You?”

“I’m good. So...what do you want to work on?”

“Well, I have homework in Arithmancy, Defense, and Potions. What about you?”

“I’m taking Care of Magical Creatures instead of Arithmancy and I haven’t had Defense yet, but I did have Potions. I’m almost done with my essay.”

“Me too. Do you need help with anything?” Hermione offered.

“Not yet, but thanks for offering.”

The pair turned to their individual assignments, working quietly for some time. Then, Hermione pushed her book aside and made a frustrated noise.

“Is something the matter?” Harry inquired, looking up.

“Professor Lupin said to pick a defensive spell that we want to learn, regardless of the level, and write down information about it and why we want to learn it, where it would be useful, that kind of thing,” Hermione explained.

“So what’s wrong?”

“There are too many spells! I can’t make up my mind!”

This very Hermione-like exclamation made Harry grin. “You Ravenclaws,” he teased lightly. “Why don’t you pick...oh, the Patronus Charm.”

“The Patronus Charm?” Hermione repeated, frowning. “I don’t recall that one...” She seemed ashamed to admit that she didn’t know something.

“The incantation is ‘Expecto patronum,’ and it conjures a corporeal embodiment of a protector,” Harry recited, trying to remember what one of the books he had studied said. “Generally used to repel dementors and lethifolds. It draws on your happy emotions to power the spell.”

Hermione’s eyes were shining. “That sounds fascinating! Where did you learn about it? It’s not in any of our schoolbooks, is it?”

“Um...I read about it in...one of my dad’s books,” Harry lied. “I did a lot of studying this summer to pull my grades up.”

“I’ve noticed. Your practical work is better than last year,” Hermione commented. “Thanks for telling me about that spell; I think I’ll choose that — unless you wanted it?”

“No, that’s okay, go ahead,” Harry urged. “There are tons of other spells for me to pick from.”

“Harry?”

The Boy-Who-Lived turned and found his sister standing behind him. “Oh, hi Lila! How were your classes?”

“They were fine. What about you? Was everything okay?” Lila inquired, referring to the fact that this was not exactly the Hogwarts that Harry knew.

“Yeah, everything was great; well except for Malfoy and Professor Snape.” At that, Lila laughed and even Hermione grinned a little, though she still looked somewhat disapproving. “Anyway, did you come down here for something?”

“Oh, I wanted to ask you if you could maybe help me with my Care of Magical Creatures homework. We’re supposed to research hippogriffs. I’m a little nervous; Hagrid showed them to us and they don’t look very friendly.”

"Hippogriffs? Piece of cake," Harry assured her. "They're just like horses with wings, but they're very touchy and prideful. Just be careful not to insult them and do what Hagrid says, and you'll be fine."

"You sound like you're dealt with them," Hermione observed.

Harry almost blurted out that he had, when he realized that he might not have in this dimension. "Er...the book I read made them seem pretty harmless if you show respect," he said quickly, throwing Lila a wink. "I think there's some information over in that section."

"Thanks!" Lila said and hurried off towards the indicated area.

Eying Harry, Hermione cocked her head and remarked, "That was nice of you."

"What do you mean?"

"Last year, you wouldn't have given her the time of day. You've changed, Harry, you've changed a lot...for the better, I think."

Blushing, Harry looked down and mumbled, "Not really, but thank you."

"How touching," a quite unwelcome voice sneered. "Really, Potter, associating with a Mudblood! And I thought you couldn't possibly sink any lower."

"I certainly couldn't sink any lower than you," Harry retorted, surreptitiously drawing his wand. "Really, having a Death Eater for a father must be terribly embarrassing."

"But having a Mudblood for a mother must be worse," Malfoy taunted, making Harry flush with anger.

"I see no dishonor in having the smartest witch of her year for a mother," Harry snapped. "If *your* parents were so wonderful, why didn't they accomplish something beyond kissing some idiot's robe hems? Oh yeah, they had you — but that could hardly count as an accomplishment now, could it?"

“*Densaugeo!*” Malfoy screamed, enraged.

“*Protego!*” Harry yelled immediately, jumping sideways so that his shield charm covered Hermione as well.

“What is going on here?” Madam Pince screeched, arriving on the scene. “Out! All of you! This is no place for a brawl!”

“You’d better watch it, Potter,” Malfoy hissed as the librarian hustled them out. “You and that Mudblood friend of yours.”

“Why would Hermione need to watch out?” Harry wanted to know. “She’s loads smarter than you and me. How can you be so dangerous if you can’t even beat a Muggleborn in class? You’re pathetic.”

With that, he grabbed Hermione’s arm and stalked away, pulling her along. When they were several corridors away, he stopped to catch his breath. “Sorry about getting us kicked out of the library,” he apologized. “I didn’t mean to, but I couldn’t let Malfoy curse us.”

However, Hermione seemed to be astonished at something. “You said it! You actually said it!”

“What?” Harry asked, bewildered.

“You admitted in front of Malfoy that there’s someone on this planet better than you!”

“Well, yeah, isn’t that what you wanted me to do? I didn’t actually plan it, though, it just slipped out.”

“I never thought you’d actually do it!”

“Hermione, listen, I know you’re smarter than me; you know you’re smarter than me; the whole school probably knows it! Why is this such a big deal?” Harry demanded.

“Because you’re *Harry Potter*! The Boy-Who-Lived! You never ever admit that anyone is better than you in *anything*!”

“Well, that’s stupid,” Harry said matter-of-factly. “I see that now. Clearly, I was an idiot.”

There was silence for several minutes, and Harry was starting to feel uncomfortable, when Hermione shook her head. “This doesn’t make sense.”

“What?”

“None of this adds up. Harry...what did you say to me last year, the day you stole my Transfiguration essay and copied it?”

“How should I know? I- I don’t remember.”

“Who are you!” Hermione hissed, seizing his wrists and staring him in the eye. “You can’t be Harry Potter. No one changes that much in one summer. It’s impossible! *Who are you!*”

Chapter Twenty: The Staff Suspects

Alternate dimension:

When Harry finally finished his story, Hermione was stunned.

"Wow...your world sounds...exciting," she commented slowly.

"Dangerous, more like," Harry grumbled. "I wish I could stay here forever."

"But, Harry...do you realize...if you're here, the Harry of this world might be..."

"...back in my world?" Harry completed her sentence. "Oh no! I never thought of that, I was so caught up with seeing my parents again...I've got to find a way back!"

"I think you'd better talk to Professor Dumbledore," Hermione told him gravely. "He could probably help you get back."

"How could he? I don't even know how I got here in the first place!" Harry exclaimed. "I just woke up one morning, and here I was!"

"And your parents didn't notice at all?" Hermione asked, trying to figure out how that could have happened.

"Well...they just think I've grown up a lot," Harry said with a shrug. "Dad gives me this funny look sometimes, but no one seems too suspicious...yet. And Professor Dumbledore hasn't seen me much lately."

"Still, someone's bound to get suspicious!" Hermione pointed out. She didn't know just how right she was.

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The first staff meeting of the school year was drawing to a close when Dumbledore inquired, "How is Mr. Potter?"

All of the teachers, even Snape, exchanged glances. Finally, McGonagall stated flatly, "He's changed, Albus."

“Changed? How so?”

“Well, for one,” Snape cut in bitingly, “he didn’t complain about not being made Prefect.”

“Say, Albus, why wasn’t he made a Prefect?” Sprout queried. “I wondered about that.”

“I felt it would be best if he focused on his schoolwork instead,” Dumbledore answered delicately. “Besides, I’m sure Mr. Longbottom is benefiting from the responsibility.”

“Hah! That clumsy fool,” Snape snorted. “Responsibility indeed! I don’t know what you were thinking...even Weasley would have been better!”

“Now, now, Severus, let’s stay on topic. What exactly has changed about Mr. Potter?”

“His grades have shot up,” Flitwick reported. “If he keeps improving like this, he could easily make it to the top of the class, barring Ms. Granger.”

“Speaking of Ms. Granger, I noticed them studying in the library together,” Madam Pince added. “They seemed to be getting along quite well, as opposed to last year.”

“Hmm, anything else?”

After a moment’s silence, Snape grudgingly spoke. “Much as it pains me to admit it, Potter has been flaunting his title slightly less. I’ve heard no reports of him bullying or showing off.”

“Mr. Potter does not ‘bully’ anyone!” McGonagall protested. “He is merely practicing leadership skills!”

“Leadership!” Snape exclaimed incredulously. “You call forcing younger students to do his work *leadership*?”

“That is not the issue,” Dumbledore diverted the conversation gently. “Does anyone else have anything to say?”

“Harry’s been treating Lila better,” Remus offered. “And he doesn’t seem so...hostile to me anymore.”

“Is it really a radical change?” Dumbledore questioned.

“Well, by itself, I’d say he was maturing,” Remus mused, “but combined with everything else...it seems just a little bit suspicious.”

“Very well, then,” Dumbledore decided. “Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I’ll be sure to have a chat with Mr. Potter soon.”

Author's Note: Hey, can you guys do me a favor and check out my new story *Colliding Worlds*? It's a crossover with Power Rangers. Just give it a try, will ya?

Chapter Twenty-One: Hermione's Help

Canon dimension:

After leaving Dumbledore's office, Harry ran blindly, as if by running he could leave the awful images he had just seen behind. Unfortunately, it was not so. Before long, he collapsed, shaking, in a deserted corridor.

"What am I going to do?" he moaned to himself. "Voldemort's going to kill me..."

He thought, truly thought, about what the Headmaster had said: "*Do you know that people look up to you as a beacon of hope? You carry a great responsibility on your shoulders.*"

Sure, Harry knew that people looked up to him; he had enjoyed that immensely...but as a sign of hope? What if he failed them? Never before had he doubted his ability to live up to the world's expectations, but then he had not seen or known of Voldemort's power. The memory duel in the courtyard had just confirmed that he could hardly hope to stand up to the Dark Lord without some kind of miracle.

"If I can't kill Voldemort...I'll be...*humiliated!*" Harry mumbled. "I'm the Boy-Who-Lived; I'm supposed to be able to defeat him..."

"Harry?"

Harry's head snapped up. "Wha...Hermione? What are you doing here?"

"I'm a Prefect," Hermione reminded him. "I was making my rounds. What are *you* doing here? It's after curfew. I know Professor Dumbledore wanted to talk to you, but you should have been done before now."

"I...er...w-wanted to take a walk," Harry stammered, trying to think up an excuse.

Hermione frowned. "You wanted to take a walk," she repeated slowly, "so you came up here to an out-of-the way corridor and then sat down talking to yourself?"

"Um...yeah."

"Don't be ridiculous, Harry. You may not be my Harry, but I still know you better than that. What were you really doing?" Stepping closer, Hermione raised her wand, which was glowing from the Lumos Charm, and peered at Harry. His face was white, and he wore an expression of utmost dismay and confusion, as if the very foundations of his world had been shaken. Much as he tried to hide his distress, it was painfully obvious that something was wrong.

"Harry...are you okay? What happened?" Hermione asked immediately, kneeling down next to him. "Are you sick?"

The other teen stared at her with wide, desperate eyes. "Hermione," he whispered, "how am I going to kill Voldemort?"

For a moment, the two Harrys ceased to exist, and Hermione saw only the same scared little boy that she had first seen on the Hogwarts Express four years ago. Leaning forward, she impulsively hugged him. "Oh Harry...you don't have to kill him. Professor Dumbledore will protect you—"

"But I'm the Boy-Who-Lived," Harry interrupted. For once, he sounded unhappy rather than proud of the title. "I *have* to fight him. It's what people expect. Everyone knows I did it once, so they'll expect me to do it again."

"So what? It's your life, Harry. You don't have to live by the stereotype of the Boy-Who-Lived. Don't you want to be your own person?"

"Well...I don't know. I just don't know. But I don't want to fight Voldemort!"

"I know," Hermione said gently, "but you're right in saying that everyone expects you to. I wish you didn't have to fight either, but

you're right in the middle of things. You-Know-Who isn't going to give up, now that he's back."

"So what do I do? I...I don't want to...*die*."

"Hmm...train, I suppose. Maybe you can't stand up to You-Know-Who in terms of power and knowledge, but you can at least learn to defend yourself," Hermione pointed out briskly.

"Train? You mean, like study and practice spells and stuff?" Harry queried, wrinkling his nose in disgust.

"Yes. Don't look at me like that, Harry. You can't ride off your fame forever. What are you going to do after Hogwarts? Not everyone will just hand you a job because of your title."

"Ah...all right," Harry agreed reluctantly. Pausing, he hesitated for a moment before adding, for the first time in his life, "I wish I wasn't the Boy-Who-Lived."

A faint grin appeared on Hermione's face. "You aren't so different from my Harry after all."

Although he didn't know why, Harry felt a faint surge of pleasant surprise at her remark. "Er...thanks."

"You're welcome. Come on, then, you need to get back to the dorms before a teacher finds us," Hermione urged, offering him a hand. She pulled him to his feet and they started off down the corridor.

Author's Note: I'm not quite happy with this chapter. Something is a little off about it...I'm no good at writing deep characterizations or anything, so please let me know what I can do to improve it.

Chapter Twenty-Two: Don't Try to Lie

Alternate dimension:

"Ah, Mr. Potter, sit down," Dumbledore invited. "How have you been?"

"I- I'm fine, sir," Harry stammered. "You wanted to see me?"

"Yes. I've been hearing some odd reports about you, my boy." Leaning forward, the Headmaster fixed his eyes, which were no longer twinkling, on Harry, and gave him a piercing look.

"Odd?" Harry repeated nervously.

For a long moment, there was silence. Then, suddenly, Dumbledore stood and drew his wand. "Who are you?" he asked harshly.

Harry paled, overwhelmed at the power Dumbledore was exuding and frightened by the stern glare. "I'm Harry Potter, sir."

"Do not lie to me!"

"Professor, I swear, I'm Harry Potter! It's just...I'm from another dimension, sir. I know it sounds hard to believe, but you have to believe to me! I just woke up one day and I was here and everything was weird—"

"Slow down...what do you mean, another dimension?" Dumbledore inquired, his brow furrowing.

"I don't know, sir. I think it's another dimension..."

Frowning, Dumbledore lowered his wand. "Tell me what happened," he ordered.

"Er, one night during this summer, I was at Privet Drive — you know, at my aunt's house — and when I woke up, I was at Potter Mansion. I don't know how..."

"I see," Dumbledore murmured slowly. His eyes began to twinkle again. "I apologize if I frightened you, Mr. Potter. I thought you might be Voldemort's spy."

“What? I’d never!” Harry protested indignantly. He paused as something occurred to him. “Professor...how did you know I wasn’t the same Harry?”

“It’s an art called Legilimency,” Dumbledore explained, sitting down again. “It allows you to see someone’s surface thoughts and tell if they’re lying.”

“You mean you can read people’s thoughts?” Harry queried, shifting uncomfortably.

“Something similar to that. However, most Legilimens need eye contact, and there is an opposite art, Occlumency, that you can learn to defend your mind.”

“So you looked at me and just knew that I was different?”

“Well, several of the staff have observed a change in your behavior. I gather you had a rather different life in your original world?”

“You could say that,” Harry replied, grimacing.

“Have you told your parents?”

“Er...well...no.” Seeing the Headmaster’s questioning gaze, Harry winced and looked down. “Wh-what if they don’t want me anymore because I’m not their son?”

“My dear boy, you should know your parents better than that! Lily and James would never turn out a child,” Dumbledore said gently. “But they need to know. Wouldn’t you rather that they accept you for who you are, rather than for someone else?”

“I guess...”

“Good!” Dumbledore beamed. “Suppose I ask them, and perhaps your godfather, to come to my office tonight? You can tell us about your life then, so you don’t have to repeat yourself.”

“Um...okay,” Harry agreed reluctantly.

“Excellent! You may go back to class then.”

Inwardly dreading that evening, Harry left the office and returned to his Charms class, where he slid into his seat next to Hermione.

“Well? What did Professor Dumbledore want?” she inquired curiously.

“He knows,” was all Harry needed to say.

“How?”

“The teachers noticed my ‘strange’ behavior,” Harry told her glumly. “I guess I wasn’t doing a very good job of acting like the Harry from here.”

“That’s a good thing,” Hermione assured him. “I I-like you a lot better this way.”

“Thanks,” Harry sighed, grinning fondly at his friend. “I don’t know what I’d do without you.”

Hi everyone,

As you can see, this is not a new update. I'm sure you've been wondering why I stopped updating. Well, I have to apologize, because I understand how frustrating it is to read an unfinished story, but I've decided to stop writing. I've been struggling with this issue for a while now, and I just don't have the self-control to read and write fanfiction and still keep up with more important things, like schoolwork. I feel that this is becoming an addiction and interfering with my spiritual life, so I need to stop now, before it gets out of hand. Furthermore, I've actually lost interest in Harry Potter in general. I hope you all understand, and once again, I apologize.

Thank you for reading my work; you've inspired and encouraged me so much. God bless!

Sincerely,

Light Avatar